

FINK — 10/823,632
Attorney Docket: 071469-0309183

REMARKS

Claims 1, 13, 14, 17, and 22 are amended hereby. No claims are canceled or added. Accordingly, after entry of this Amendment, claims 1-33 will remain pending. Since claims 31-33 have been withdrawn from further consideration, claims 1-30 are currently being examined.

In the non-final Office Action dated March 24, 2006, the Examiner acknowledged the Applicant's election of Group I, encompassing claims 1-30, for further prosecution. While the Applicant respectfully maintains disagreement with the Examiner's Restriction Requirement, the Applicant respectfully acknowledges that claims 31-33 have been withdrawn from further consideration.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claim 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim what the Applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, the Examiner found that the terms Rexolite™ and Teflon™ are trademark names and, therefore, that the claims do not comply with applicable requirements. In response, the Applicant has substituted common terms for the trademark names and, as a result, believes that the Examiner's rejection has been overcome.

In the Office Action, the Examiner also rejected claims 1-12, 16, and 18-28 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Johnson (PCT Application Publication No. WO 99/53120). Claims 13-15, 17, 29, and 30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Johnson in view of Rice et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,095,083). The Applicant respectfully disagrees with these rejections and, therefore, respectfully traverses the same.

The Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-30 are patentably distinguishable over the references cited by the Examiner because they recite a plasma reactor that combines a number of features including, among them, a chuck assembly, a plasma source assembly, a holding structure, a vacuum pump positioned below the plasma source assembly, and at least one utility via assembly extending vertically between the chuck assembly and the holding structure to connect the chuck assembly to the holding structure, thereby suspending the chuck assembly below the plasma source assembly in the vacuum chamber. None of the references relied upon by the Examiner describe or suggest at least this combination of features and, as a result, cannot be relied upon, either singly or together, to anticipate or render obvious any of claims 1-30. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests that the

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Examiner withdraw the rejections asserted against claims 1-30 and pass this application quickly to issuance.

In contrast to the present invention, Johnson describes a reduced impedance chamber that includes a turbomolecular pump 46 disposed above a plasma source 36 and a chuck assembly. (Johnson at Figs. 5 and 15, for example.) There is no discussion of a holding structure or a utility via assembly extending vertically between the chuck assembly and the holding structure to connect the chuck assembly to the holding structure, thereby suspending the chuck assembly below the plasma source assembly in the vacuum chamber. As a result, Johnson does not describe at least two of the features recited by claims 1-30. Accordingly, Johnson cannot be relied upon to anticipate any of claims 1-30.

Johnson also fails to assist the Examiner with rendering any of claims 1-30 obvious. In particular, given that Johnson describes and illustrates a construction for a reduced impedance chamber that includes a turbomolecular pump 46 disposed above a plasma source 36 and a chuck assembly, those skilled in the art would not look to Johnson for any teaching associated with the subject matter of the present claims.

Rice et al. does not correct the deficiencies noted with respect to Johnson. Rice et al. describes a vacuum processing chamber with multi-mode access. The vacuum processing chamber 40 includes a pedestal 54 beneath a housing 66 surrounding the center gas feed 64. (Rice et al. at Fig. 4A and at col. 11, lines 31-65.) There is no discussion of at least a holding structure and at least one utility via assembly extending vertically between the chuck assembly and the holding structure to connect the chuck assembly to the holding structure, thereby suspending the chuck assembly below the plasma source assembly in the vacuum chamber. Accordingly, Rice et al. cannot be combined properly with Johnson to render obvious any of claims 1-30. In view of this, the Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

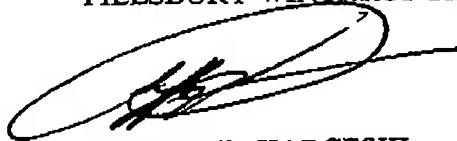
Each of the rejections having been addressed, the Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider the rejection of the claims and withdraw the asserted rejections.

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Respectfully submitted,

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